

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Roundabout to increase safety at SR 206 intersection**Open House meeting scheduled for March 23<sup>rd</sup>

In an effort to reduce collisions and improve safety, the Washington State Department of Transportation will construct a "Roundabout" at the SR 206/Bruce Road intersection near Spokane in 2005. The work will get underway in the spring and construction will be complete in 2005. Motorists will then be able to move through the intersection without stopping, provided that they yield to vehicles already in the facility. This improvement will allow motorists to move more safely and efficiently through this intersection.

Although the existing intersection meets all applicable standards and has at least one half mile of visibility in all directions, there have been a number of collisions at this intersection. The current intersection has had an average of six collisions per year from 1999 through 2002. The crashes are often attributed to drivers stopping and then pulling out into oncoming traffic.

The Department will hold an informational open house on Wednesday, March 23, 2005 to help familiarize the community with modern roundabouts, how they operate, and the associated safety benefits. The open house will be held at Mt. Spokane High School, 6015 E. Mt. Spokane Park Drive from 4:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. There will be a number of displays and videos for viewing and WSDOT staff will be on hand to answer any questions. There is no formal presentation so citizens can drop in anytime during the three-hour open house.

In 1997, the WSDOT rebuilt the intersection to improve the sight distance and added other safety features such as oversized stop signs, flashing lights on signs in addition to a flashing beacon, a "Caution, Cross Traffic Does Not Stop" signs (two in each direction) on Bruce Road, and added signs "Look Again, Cross Traffic Does Not Stop" on the stop signs. Despite these improvements, the location continued to have collisions. WSDOT chose a roundabout for this location in an attempt to improve the intersection's safety record by reducing the number and severity of collisions.

An average of 3,500 vehicles travel through this portion of SR 206 each day with traffic on Bruce Road averaging about 6,700. The current posted speed limit on SR 206 near this intersection is 50 miles-per-hour and the speed on Bruce Road is 45 mph. This will be the second time WSDOT has built a roundabout on a rural highway with high speed limits. A similar facility on State Route 203, just east of Redmond near Duvall, opened in September. That particular location has double the traffic volume as the SR 206 intersection. In the Eastern Region, the WSDOT, working with the City of Colville, has constructed a roundabout on US 395 in that Stevens County city.

(More)

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SR 206 Roundabout

March 15, 2005

Roundabouts funnel traffic from several directions, in and out of a doughnut-shaped intersection with no traffic lights. A roundabout accommodates intersections with a high volume of left turns better than a multi-phased traffic signal. Statistics show fewer accidents happen at intersections with roundabouts when compared to those with traditional traffic signals. In addition to reducing congestion and increasing safety, roundabouts eliminate maintenance costs associated with traffic signals, which can amount to approximately \$3,000 per year, per intersection. The design of the SR 206 roundabout will have one lane of circulating traffic. Motorists on SR 206 or Bruce Road will enter the roundabout when the path is clear, travel in the counterclockwise rotation around the center island, and exit to one of the three other legs. The roundabout will also be able to accommodate larger vehicles such as busses, trucks, semi tractor/trailer combinations, and farm equipment.

Roundabouts are used extensively throughout the United States and Europe to reduce vehicle crashes, traffic delays, fuel consumption, air pollution and construction costs. They have been used successfully to control traffic speeds in residential areas and are accepted as one of the safest types of intersection design. Roundabouts have been shown to reduce fatal and injury crashes as much as 76 percent in the United States. Research also suggests that roundabouts are safer than signalized intersections for pedestrians. A study by Ryerson Polytechnic and the University of Maine shows that installing roundabouts result in a 39% decrease in crashes, a 76% decrease in injury accidents and a 90% drop in fatal or incapacitating injuries.

The WSDOT developed an internet page for the project to introduce the concept to area residents. Design concepts and on-line videos on how to use a roundabout and how large vehicles handle these facilities are available. Go to <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR206BruceRoadRoundabout> .

The Department will advertise for construction bids in spring 2005 with construction underway shortly thereafter.

A total of 58 roundabouts have already been constructed in Washington State.

### ***How To Drive a Roundabout***

- As a driver approaches a roundabout, there will be a YIELD sign. The driver should slow down, watch for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists and be prepared to stop if necessary.
- When a driver enters, he/she yields to circulating traffic on the left, but does not stop if the way is clear.
- The roundabout will have ONE WAY signs mounted in the center island. They help guide traffic and indicate that the driver must stay to the right of the center island.
- When approaching the desired exit leg, the driver should turn on his/her right turn signal and watch for pedestrians and bicyclists as he/she exits.
- Left turns are completed by traveling around the central island.

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